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*To the Right Honourable SIR GEORGE CLERK, and  
the other Members of the Royal Commission of  
Inquiry into the Working of the FORBES M'KEN-  
ZIE ACT, and the Laws regulating the Sale and  
Consumption of Spirituous Liquors in Scotland.*

GENTLEMEN,

In humbly submitting to you our views on the main points of the pending Inquiry, we, the DIRECTORS of the SCOTTISH TEMPERANCE LEAGUE, beg, in the outset, to state that the League of which we are the executive, was formed in 1844, and, at present, consists of 7267 members, each being an abstainer, and of 377 affiliated societies, each of these having a large membership, in addition to the special membership of this institution. Its annual revenue is about £8000. As a national institution, it concentrates the total abstinence movement in Scotland. Its Board has all along watched with deep interest the operation of the M'Kenzie Act, and have devoted their attention to obtaining authentic evidence on the subject from all parts of the country.

That we are not interested parties in any special sense, will be evident from the simply humane and benevolent character of the temperance movement we represent. We simply contribute of our substance, and seek, by our exertions, to suppress the evil of intemperance, and, in concurrence with other Christian and philanthropic institutions, to promote the moral and religious elevation of the people. The amount annually expended for the promotion of sobriety in

Scotland, by the temperance reformers embraced in the Scottish Temperance League, is computed to exceed Twenty Thousand Pounds; and the greater part of this is contributed by the industrial classes.

We regarded the M'Kenzie Act as a legislative experiment, and watched its effects with an interested but impartial eye. In the light of well-authenticated practical proof of its salutary effects to the precise extent in which it has been enforced, we unhesitatingly express our cordial approval of the provisions of the Act; any improvement we have to suggest being in the direction of increased stringency rather than of relaxation.

Having made these preliminary remarks, we would respectfully submit the following suggestions:—

1. That no grocer should be allowed to hold a license to retail intoxicating drinks. We object to this as being detrimental to the morals of the community. The temptations thus presented to tradesmen's wives, female servants, and others, who have frequent occasion to visit grocers' shops to buy provisions, are perilous in the extreme.

If, however, any class of grocers be allowed to retain their licenses, we would suggest that they should be prohibited from opening before public-houses, and from selling liquor in other than in sealed bottles, and in quantities less than the sixth of a gallon.

2. That the hour of opening for houses, of every description, for the sale of excisable liquors, should not be earlier than eight o'clock A.M. The power which the Act gives to the authorities to fix the hours of opening earlier than eight, we think should be withdrawn. We think it would be beneficial that the authorities should have power to fix any hour for closing from eight to eleven o'clock, P.M., according to the cir-

circumstances of the district, and the expressed wish of the inhabitants.

3. That the Act be made to declare precisely who are the parties to enforce it. On this point it is not determinate; and, as the inevitable consequence, it has in many localities remained inoperative. We would also submit that the enforcement of the Acts regulating Public-houses should be committed to the police authorities, and that there should be a special staff of officers for this duty, with an inspector, invested with well-defined powers.

4. That such powers be given to the authorities as will enable them to convict illicit sellers on circumstantial evidence, with power to fine persons found in the shebeens.

5. Taking into consideration the present state of public sentiment on the subject of drinking, we would suggest that there be a fixed and considerably increased rental necessary to qualify houses for being licensed, and also that the scale of licenses should be revised, with the view of the rates being increased: and that there should not be more than one public-house for every 500 of the population.

6. That it be made imperative on the authorities to advertise all applications for license, with full details, in at least one of the local newspapers, ten days prior to the meeting of the Licensing Court; and that power be given to the householders of the district concerned, to veto the granting of licenses in their respective localities.

7. That, by no arrangement with excise, or in any other way, shall a place be opened for the sale of intoxicating liquors, until a certificate for the same has been regularly obtained from the magistrates.

8. That the Martinmas Licensing term should be dispensed with.

9. That in burghs there should be no appeal from the decisions of the magistrates in regard to licenses. They are responsible for the maintenance of the public peace. Chosen by the inhabitants, they are the party most likely to reflect the popular sentiment. If, however, the present liberty of appeal should be continued, we would suggest that the Appeal Court should be composed of existing magistrates of the city or burgh, along with certain others retired from office ; in which case, the inhabitants of the district concerned as well as the publicans, should have the right of appeal.

10. No license should be granted to any employer of workmen, police officer, inspector of poor, or other public servant.

11. To prevent evasions of the law, it ought to be made imperative that no publican be allowed to reside on his licensed premises.

12. That the sale of excisable liquors should be prohibited at races, fairs, and other public gatherings.

13. That licenses be refused to all premises that are furnished with back doors or other concealed entrances.

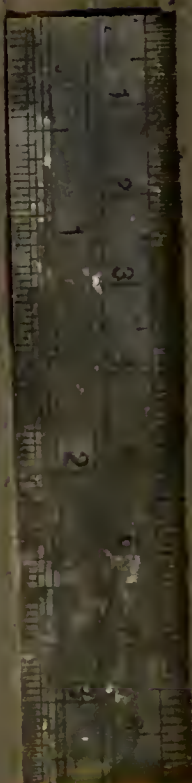
By order of the Directors,

JOHN S. MARR,

SECRETARY.







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GUTTERS.